

# Advance Monthly Retail Sales

CURRENT BUSINESS REPORTS

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The Census Bureau of the Department of Commerce announced today that advance estimates of U.S. retail sales for April adjusted for seasonal, holiday, and trading-day differences but not for price changes were \$139.9 billion, 5.0 percent above April 1988. Total sales in the February through April period were unchanged from the prior three months but were 5.0 percent above the same period a year ago.

Durable goods were 1.2 percent above the previous year. Furniture stores were up 5.7 percent from April of last year.

Nondurable goods were 7.5 percent above the previous year. General merchandise stores were up 7.6 percent above April last year, while food stores were up 8.2 percent in the same period. Gasoline service stations increased 2.2 percent from March and were up 7.9 percent from last year. Apparel increased 3.6 percent from the previous month and were 10.2 percent above April 1988.

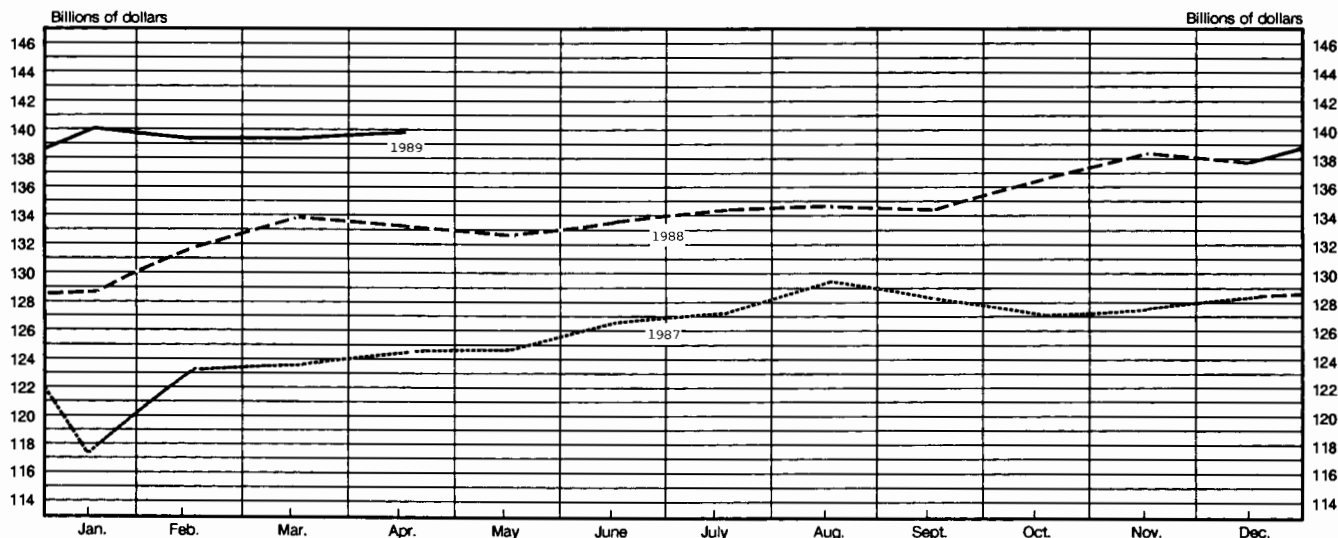
**Note:** Since this survey is based on a sample, the estimates will differ from the universe values due to both sampling and nonsampling error. For the month-to-month, year-to-year, and quarter-to-quarter percent changes shown at the total, durable, and nondurable levels, the margins of sampling error range from .8 to 4.0 percentage points above and below the estimate. See page 4 for a more complete description.

The Advance Monthly Retail Sales Report for May is scheduled to be released June 13, 1989 at 8:30 a.m.

## ESTIMATED MONTHLY RETAIL SALES

January 1987-April 1989

(Data adjusted for seasonal, holiday, and trading-day differences)



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U.S. Department of Commerce  
BUREAU OF THE CENSUS

The Advance Monthly Retail Sales report, the Monthly Retail Trade report, and the Annual Retail Trade report are available on a single subscription from the Superintendent of Documents, U.S. Government Printing Office, Washington, D.C. 20402. This report is available electronically in CENDATA, the Bureau's on-line information service, through a commercial vendor. For further information, contact Customer Services, DUSD, Bureau of the Census, Washington, D.C. 20233, or call (301) 763-4100 or (301) 763-7561.

**Table 1. Estimated Monthly Retail Sales, by Kind of Business**

(Sales in millions of dollars)

SIC code	Kind of business	Not adjusted					Adjusted <sup>1</sup>				
		1989			1988		1989			1988	
		Apr. <sup>2</sup> adv.	Mar. prel.	Feb. final	Apr.	Mar.	Apr. <sup>2</sup> adv.	Mar. prel.	Feb. final	Apr. <sup>1</sup>	Mar. <sup>1</sup>
	Retail trade, total.....	136,221	139,691	118,891	132,374	133,127	139,931	139,361	139,428	133,217	133,797
	Total (excl. auto group)..	104,467	106,733	91,690	100,186	99,990	109,121	108,878	108,785	102,784	102,820
	Durable goods, total.....	52,357	53,531	45,146	52,897	52,995	52,635	52,606	53,071	51,993	52,259
52	Building mat., hardware, garden										
	supply, and mobile home dealers..	7,615	6,854	5,491	7,884	6,986	7,259	7,292	7,483	7,425	7,382
521,3	Building mat. and supply stores.	(*)	4,869	3,992	5,372	4,921	(*)	5,219	5,409	5,231	5,213
525	Hardware stores.....	(*)	1,042	865	1,264	1,071	(*)	1,109	1,149	1,178	1,136
55 ex. 554	Automotive dealers.....	31,754	32,958	27,201	32,188	33,137	30,810	30,483	30,643	30,433	30,977
551,2,5,	Motor vehicle and miscellaneous										
6,7,9	automotive dealers.....	29,312	30,533	25,216	29,641	30,679	28,348	27,986	28,174	27,911	28,459
551	Motor vehicle (franchised)....	(*)	27,315	22,696	26,206	27,424	(*)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
553	Auto and home supply stores.....	(*)	2,425	1,985	2,547	2,458	(*)	2,497	2,469	2,522	2,518
57	Furniture, home furnishings, and										
	equipment stores.....	7,408	7,864	7,054	7,148	7,259	8,123	8,223	8,287	7,684	7,572
571	Furniture and home furnishings..	(*)	3,887	3,471	3,683	3,725	(*)	3,938	4,031	3,793	3,778
5722,32	Household appliance, radio,										
	and TV stores.....	(*)	3,437	3,075	2,992	3,064	(*)	3,704	3,665	3,369	3,291
5722	Household appliance stores....	(*)	767	654	789	757	(*)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
	Nondurable goods, total.....	83,864	86,160	73,745	79,477	80,132	87,296	86,755	86,357	81,224	81,538
53	General merchandise group stores..	14,710	14,547	11,025	13,818	13,747	15,933	15,768	15,755	14,803	14,959
531	Dept. stores (ex. leased depts.)	12,369	12,247	9,161	11,580	11,508	13,386	13,254	13,238	12,398	12,495
531	Dept. stores (in. leased depts.) <sup>3</sup>	(*)	12,665	9,487	12,033	11,965	(*)	13,662	13,670	12,870	12,963
533	Variety stores.....	(*)	671	500	636	658	(*)	654	654	643	665
539	Misc. general mdse. stores.....	(*)	1,629	1,364	1,602	1,581	(*)	1,860	1,863	1,762	1,799
54	Food stores.....	28,300	29,473	26,125	26,813	27,022	29,228	29,021	29,016	27,021	27,027
541	Grocery stores.....	26,550	27,599	24,501	25,118	25,339	27,399	27,164	27,193	25,295	25,339
554	Gasoline service stations.....	8,924	8,597	7,649	8,338	8,236	9,032	8,836	8,633	8,371	8,447
56	Apparel and accessory stores.....	6,720	7,007	5,103	6,333	6,527	7,195	6,942	6,978	6,530	6,609
561	Men's and boys' clothing										
	and furnishings stores.....	(*)	671	547	726	673	(*)	764	776	761	774
562,3,8	Women's clothing, specialty										
	stores, furriers.....	(*)	2,720	2,044	2,482	2,521	(*)	2,728	2,707	2,569	2,565
565	Family clothing stores.....	(*)	1,650	1,199	1,537	1,561	(*)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
566	Shoe stores.....	(*)	1,385	907	1,188	1,305	(*)	1,215	1,209	1,159	1,177
58	Eating and drinking places.....	13,609	13,636	11,885	12,893	12,553	13,541	13,663	13,677	12,715	12,693
591	Drug and proprietary stores.....	4,921	5,309	4,778	4,748	4,883	5,169	5,251	5,199	4,875	4,864
592	Liquor stores.....	(*)	1,507	1,335	1,524	1,457	(*)	1,627	1,614	1,614	1,589
5961 (pt.)	Mail-order houses (department										
	store merchandise).....	(*)	275	216	280	278	(*)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
53,56,57	GAF. <sup>4</sup> .....	(*)	33,951	27,304	31,474	31,707	(*)	36,198	36,291	33,952	34,045

\*Advance estimates are not available from the subsample panel for these kinds of business.

NA Not available. <sup>1</sup> Revised

<sup>1</sup>Data are concurrently adjusted for seasonal variations, holiday, and trading-day differences. Concurrent seasonal adjustment uses all available unadjusted estimates as input to the X-11 program and the factors derived from the program are used in calculating all seasonally adjusted data shown in this publication. Factors and explanatory material are contained in the Monthly Retail Trade Report, BR-89-03.

<sup>2</sup>Advance estimates are based on early reporting by a small subsample of the full survey panel. All other estimates are based on the full sample.

<sup>3</sup>Includes data-for leased departments operated within department stores. Data for this line not included in broader kind-of-business totals.

<sup>4</sup>GAF represents stores which specialize in department store types of merchandise.

Note: Totals include data for kinds of business not shown separately.

**Table 2. Percent Change in Estimated Monthly Retail Sales, by Kind of Business**

(Adjusted for seasonal variations, holiday, and trading-day differences)

SIC code	Kind of business	Percent change					
		Apr. 1989 advance from--		Mar. 1989 preliminary from--		Feb. 1989 through Apr. 1989	
		Mar. 1989 prelim.	Apr. 1988 final	Feb. 1989 final	Mar. 1988 final	Nov. 1988 through Jan. 1989	Feb. 1988 through Apr. 1988
	Retail trade, total.....	+0.4	+5.0	0.0	+4.2	0.0	+5.0
	Total (excl. automotive group).....	+0.2	+6.2	+0.1	+5.9	+0.9	+6.5
	Durable goods, total.....	+0.1	+1.2	-0.9	+0.7	-2.2	+1.7
52	Building materials, hardware, garden supply, and mobile home dealers.....	-0.5	-2.2	-2.6	-1.2	-5.0	-0.1
55 ex. 554	Automotive dealers.....	+1.1	+1.2	-0.5	-1.6	-3.0	0.0
551,2,5,6,7,9	Motor vehicle and miscellaneous automotive dealers.....	+1.3	+1.6	-0.7	-1.7	-3.4	+0.2
57	Furniture, home furnishings, and equipment stores.....	-1.2	+5.7	-0.8	+8.6	+1.8	+8.7
	Nondurable goods, total.....	+0.6	+7.5	+0.5	+6.4	+1.4	+7.1
53	General merchandise group stores.....	+1.0	+7.6	+0.1	+5.4	0.0	+6.6
531	Dept. stores (ex. leased dept.).....	+1.0	+8.0	+0.1	+6.1	+0.2	+7.1
531	Dept. stores (in. leased dept.).....	(NA)	(NA)	-0.1	+5.4	(NA)	(NA)
54	Food stores.....	+0.7	+8.2	0.0	+7.4	+2.5	+8.1
541	Grocery stores.....	+0.9	+8.3	-0.1	+7.2	+2.4	+8.2
554	Gasoline service stations.....	+2.2	+7.9	+2.4	+4.6	+4.3	+5.7
56	Apparel and accessory stores.....	+3.6	+10.2	-0.5	+5.0	-0.9	+7.6
58	Eating and drinking places.....	-0.9	+6.5	-0.1	+7.6	-0.6	+7.5
591	Drug and proprietary stores.....	-1.6	+6.0	+1.0	+8.0	+4.0	+7.7

**Table 3. Estimated Monthly Retail Sales of Group II Companies, by Kind of Business**

(Sales in millions of dollars)

SIC code	Kind of business	Not adjusted			Adjusted <sup>1</sup>		
		Mar. 1989 prelim.	Feb. 1989 final	Mar. 1988	Mar. 1989 prelim.	Feb. 1989 final	Mar. 1988 <sup>r</sup>
	Retail trade, total.....	50,684	42,223	47,446	51,627	51,858	48,775
53	General merchandise group stores.....	13,491	10,218	12,716	14,619	14,637	13,832
531	Dept. stores (ex. leased dept.).....	11,825	8,864	11,145	12,784	12,791	12,088
531	Dept. stores (in. leased dept.).....	12,229	9,178	11,581	13,192	13,206	12,547
533	Variety stores.....	529	379	520	518	514	528
539	Miscellaneous general merchandise stores.....	1,137	975	1,051	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
54	Food stores.....	16,685	14,813	15,514	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
541	Grocery stores.....	16,420	14,587	15,279	15,973	16,083	15,128
56	Apparel and accessory stores.....	3,829	2,625	3,552	3,738	3,779	3,533
562,3,8	Women's clothing, specialty stores, furriers.....	1,495	1,069	1,360	1,483	1,472	1,372
566	Shoe stores.....	870	536	839	742	751	738
591	Drug stores and proprietary stores.....	3,162	2,846	2,869	3,106	3,159	2,869

NA Not available. <sup>r</sup> Revised

<sup>1</sup>Data are concurrently adjusted for seasonal variations, holiday, and trading-day differences. Concurrent seasonal adjustment uses all available unadjusted estimates as input to the X-11 program and the factors derived from the program are used in calculating all seasonally adjusted data shown in this publication. Factors and explanatory material are contained in the Monthly Retail Trade Report, BR-89-03.

<sup>2</sup>Includes data for leased departments operated within department stores. Data for this line not included in broader end-of-business totals.

Note: The Group II component of the sample consists of companies which had 11 or more retail establishments according to the most recent update of multi-establishment files and which were selected with certainty (i.e., their sales size exceeded specified dollar volume cutoffs which vary by kind of business).



## Sample Design and Reliability of Data

The advance sales estimates are based on early reporting of sales by a small subsample of the Bureau's retail survey panel. Because of the early reporting, the advance estimates can differ from the subsequent estimates which are based on monthly reports obtained from the full sample of retail stores. In addition, sampling variability between the subsample used for the advance estimates and the full sample can cause a difference.

Percentage differences between advance and full sample preliminary estimates of month-to-month percentage change in seasonally adjusted total retail store sales have ranged from approximately -0.3 percent to +0.7 percent with the average of the absolute differences about 0.2 percent for the past 12 months. For individual kind-of-business groups, these differences tend to be higher. Sampling variability of and revisions to advance-to-preliminary estimates are shown in table 4 below.

Preliminary estimates for March 1989 and final estimates for February 1989 based on the full sample will be published later this month in the Monthly Retail Trade Report for March (BR-89-03). The complete report will provide sales estimates in greater detail and will present a description of revisions, and the techniques used in developing the estimates.

The margin of sampling error, as used on page 1, indicates a range about the estimate which corresponds to a 90 percent confidence interval. If, for example, the estimate is up .8 percent and the margin of sampling error is 1.2 percentage points above or below the estimate, then the indicated range is down .4 percent up to 2.0 percent. If the range contains 0, it is uncertain whether there was an increase or decrease. The Monthly Retail Trade Report includes explanations of confidence intervals and sampling variability along with additional measures of sampling variability.

Table 4. Sampling Variability of and Revision to Advance-to-Preliminary Estimate

SIC code	Kind of Business	Estimated coefficient of Variation in percent of the						Preliminary-to-final percent change minus the Advance-to-preliminary percent change			
		Advance-to- preliminary ratio		Ratio to same month & year ago	Dollar volume sales est.	Ratio of current quarter to prev. quarter					
		Range <sup>1</sup>		Median	Median	Median	Median	Range <sup>2</sup>		Mean	Aver. of absolute diff.
		From	To					From	To		
	Retail trade, total.....	0.6	0.7	0.7	0.9	0.8	1.0	-0.3	+0.7	0.0	0.2
	Total (excl. auto).....	0.5	0.7	0.6	0.8	0.7	0.9	-1.0	+1.8	0.0	0.4
	Durable goods, total..	1.4	1.7	1.6	2.3	1.7	2.2	-1.6	+1.8	+0.3	1.0
52	Building materials, group stores.....	0.6	3.6	1.6	3.9	3.3	3.1	-5.2	+1.5	-0.9	1.6
55 ex. 554	Automotive dealers.....	1.7	2.2	1.9	3.1	2.3	3.0	-2.1	+2.7	+0.4	1.2
551,2,5, 6,7,9 57	Motor vehicle and misc. automotive dealers.....	1.2	2.2	1.5	3.7	2.4	3.2	-2.5	+2.8	+0.3	1.2
	Furniture, home furn. and equipment stores.....	1.6	2.3	1.9	3.7	3.3	2.7	-3.3	+4.4	+0.5	1.5
	Nondur. stores, total...	0.5	0.7	0.6	1.0	0.7	0.9	-0.8	+0.7	0.0	0.4
53 531	General merch. group, total. Dept. stores (ex. leased depts.).....	0.2	0.5	0.3	0.4	0.3	0.5	-2.6	+1.8	-0.2	0.8
54	Food stores.....	0.8	1.4	1.0	1.6	1.3	1.6	-0.9	+0.8	+0.1	0.3
541	Grocery stores.....	0.3	1.1	0.5	1.8	1.4	1.6	-0.8	+0.9	+0.1	0.3
554	Gasoline service stations...	0.7	1.2	0.8	3.0	2.2	2.8	-1.4	+2.3	-0.1	1.0
56	Apparel and acc. stores.....	1.2	3.4	1.5	2.4	1.8	1.8	-2.8	+2.2	-0.5	1.3
58	Eating and drinking .....	0.8	1.3	1.1	2.7	2.3	2.6	-1.7	+1.8	+0.3	0.9
591	Drug and proprietary .....	0.4	0.7	0.5	2.3	1.7	2.1	-1.6	+1.3	-0.1	0.7

<sup>1</sup> The ranges of sampling variability shown are based on sales estimates unadjusted for seasonal variation, holiday, and trading-day differences for the data months of March - July 1988.

<sup>2</sup> The ranges shown for the retail trade total are based on sales estimates adjusted for seasonal variations, holiday, and trading-day differences for the 12-month period, April 1988 - March 1989. The ranges for all other totals and kinds of business are based on the 12-month period May 1987-April 1988.

Note: Coefficients of variation for the ratio of current quarter to current quarter a-year-ago estimates are approximately the same as those for the ratio of current quarter to previous quarter. See appendix 8, Reliability of Data, in the Monthly Retail Trade Report for a discussion on the measures of sampling variability.

